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ABSTRACT

The goal of the UMaps Project at the University of Maryland, College Park, is to make a large, diverse campus seem smaller and more organized and thus more hospitable, especially to commuting students. The UMaps are a series of six comprehensive guides to academic, vocational, and co-curricular activities which list the opportunities and resources of different campus sub-environments corresponding to different student sub-groups. The UMaps are available as either large display posters or as brochures. (JW)

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The UMaps Project:

An attempt to communicate above boundaries of political and organizational structures

A large, diverse campus like the University of Maryland, College Park, can be an ideal environment for students to pursue current interests and to develop new ones. Such a campus, however, is a complex place and can be quite overwhelming. This is particularly true for the over 70 percent of the UMCP undergraduates who commute to campus daily, causing many of them to attend class and go home, rather than participating fully in campus life. Information about the variety of options and opportunities for students is available through catalogs, handbooks, brochures, fliers and other media, but this deluge of material may seem fragmented and confusing. For example, there is no one resource to which a student wanting to know all the opportunities in a particular area of interest can turn.

The goal of the UMaps Project is to make the campus seem smaller and more organized and thus more hospitable to students. UMaps are a series of six comprehensive guides to academic, vocational, and co-curricular activities which appeal to particular types of students. The guides are available in two formats: (1) large, colorful, graphically attractive posters to be displayed around campus in areas of high student traffic and (2) brochure-sized folded versions of the posters to be distributed at key information centers and by advisors throughout the campus.

The conceptual framework for the development of the six UMaps was provided by the work of Dr. John Holland, who in 1959 published a system which

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categorizes people and environments. Since that time, numerous studies have validated his classification system and confirmed its usefulness. Most notably, it has been repeatedly shown that when a person's interests, values, and skills are "matched" with the characteristic of a compatible environment, that person will be more satisfied, more successful, and more likely to remain in that environment.

Within a large, complex enviroment such as a university, various "sub-environments" exist. According to Holland's system, there are six sub-environments which correspond to six types of persons. Each UMap is designed to list the opportunities and resources of a particular campus sub-environment. Therefore, while it is possible that a student might identify items of interest on every UMap, it is more likely that each student will find one or two UMaps to be more apealing than the rest. Students would then use the UMap(s) to become aware of the range of options of interest to them. UMaps also help students locate the particular opportunities and resources to make them feel that they have found their "fit" at College Park.

For more information and sample copies of UMaps, please contact Dr. Barbara Jacoby, Assistant Director, Office of Commuter Affairs, 1195 Student Union Building, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland 20742.

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